

Sidetracked: A Mormon story

Filmmaker's latest project tracks Mormon Battalion

By **HAVALAH GHOLDSTON**
The Daily Herald

UTAH VALLEY — It all began with a book.

David Greenlaw Sapp, a 32-year-old filmmaker and BYU graduate, read a book belonging to his wife several years ago. The book was called "A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion" by Sgt. Daniel Tyler.

Sapp is originally from the Washington, D.C., area. He moved to Utah to attend Brigham Young University, where he met his wife, who had served an LDS mission in San Diego, Calif., partly at the Mormon Battalion visitor center.

"The book was the catalyst," Sapp said. "At first the read was pretty dry but then

I was suddenly in the book, marching with the men and feeling their experiences. It all became so interesting."

Sapp's latest movie chronicles the amazing 2,000-mile march by nearly 500 volunteer Mormon men and women.

Mormon history

The Mormons, having just left their homes in Nauvoo, Ill., after a succession of harsh persecutions, were pretty much broke and homeless. They knew they had to continue West, but had no idea how they would fund such a mass exodus.

The answer came in the form of United States President James K. Polk,

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History video on battalion drawn out, but informative

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A recent video release provides a new, in-depth look at the Mormon Battalion.

Last spring, David Greenlaw Sapp, a 32-year-old filmmaker currently residing in Woods Cross, retraced the route of the volunteer force of Mormon men and women and their incredible 2,000 mile march.

In the form of interviews from Larry Porter and Susan Easton Black, both from BYU, and many others, the narration follows the battalion from their origins in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Fort Leavenworth, Kan., to their final destination of San Diego and all of the experiences in between.

The video includes live footage of sites passed through by the battalion, fragile, yellowed photographs of members and leaders of the battalion and even many journal entries made by battalion members and

their wives.

Though the subject may deserve deep scrutiny, the 84-minute movie ran too long. The length seemed even longer by the repeated and repeated and repeated background music. It permeated the entire documentary.

However, the historical value and interest is undeniable and if this immense volume of information does not seem too daunting, the movie is worth viewing.

Sapp has a film and video production degree from BYU. Past projects include producing the full-length feature film "Fortune Cookie" and producing a musical special, "The Goodman Family Television Special." Developing projects include two motion pictures.

David Sapp's most recent project, "Mormon Battalion — Opening of the West" is now available in Deseret Book Stores.

REVIEW

